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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/667,034	09/22/2003	James D. Ralph	F-295	1511
51640	7590	10/27/2008	EXAMINER	
SPINE MP	LERNER, DAVID, et al.		SHAFTER, RICHARD R	
600 SOUTH AVENUE WEST	WESTFIELD, NJ 07090		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3775	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/667,034	Applicant(s) RALPH ET AL.
	Examiner Richard Shaffer	Art Unit 3775

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 June 2008.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-4,6-10 and 13 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-4,6-10 and 13 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1668)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 9, 10 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamada (US Patent 6,425,920) in view of Gross et al (US Patent 5,306,308) and further in view of Büttner-Janz et al (US Patent 5,501,269).

Hamada discloses (**Figures 16-18**) an intervertebral spacer (**201**) comprising: a spacer body with a central bore (**203**) passing through the upper (**205**) and lower (**209**) surfaces; both of the surfaces are substantially flat (as seen in **Figure 17**); the upper and lower surfaces are diametrically tapered (as seen in **Figure 17**); and at least two relative angle designation marks (**207**).

Hamada discloses all of the claimed limitations except for a beveled edge extending around the spacer body circumference as well as a tapered axially medial groove.

Gross et al teach (**Column 2, Lines 41-45**) that a tapered axially medial groove (**7**) simplifies the surgical procedure by allowing the implant to be held and inserted by surgical forceps. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to provide a tapered medial groove to the device of Hamada to allow surgical forceps to grip the implant, thereby facilitating the surgical procedure.

Büttner-Janz et al teach (**Figures 1-15**) intervertebral spacers having either an approximately 90 degree edge or a beveled edge extending around the circumference of the spacer. Since both a 90 degree design and a beveled design are disclosed as an appropriately shaped edge to the upper and lower surfaces of an intervertebral spacer, they are deemed equivalent structural shapes for providing an edge to an intervertebral spacer. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to provide for a beveled edge about the circumference of the device of Hamada as a mere matter of substitution with predictable results. This is further supported since applicant has not disclosed that a beveled edge solves any stated problem or is anything more than one of numerous shapes or configurations a person ordinary skill in the art would find obvious for the purpose of providing an edge on an intervertebral spacer. *In re Dailey and Eilers*, 149 USPQ 47 (1966).

Claims 1-4 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamada in view of Gross et al, further in view of Büttner-Janz et al, and additional in view of Boyle et al (US Patent 6,277,149)

The combination of Hamada, Gross et al and Büttner-Janz et al disclose and teach all of the claimed limitations except for the body having a porous surface. Boyle et al teach (**Figure 21; Element 800; Column 6, Lines 29-32**) that perforations (**800**) along the surfaces are configured to receive bone growth material which is well known in the art to improve fixation with the surrounding bone. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to provide for a porous surface on the combination of Hamada, Gross et al and Büttner-Janz et al in order to

allow bone growth material to be received which in turn improves implant fixation with the surrounding bone.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Richard Shaffer whose telephone number is (571)272-8683. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (7am-5pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Richard Shaffer/
Examiner, Art Unit 3775
/Eduardo C. Robert/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3733